

Hilde/Linda History
To be Continued

CAPITAL REPERTORY COMPANY
A BIOGRAPHY

SUMMERS, 1976-1980: The League of Theatre Artists, Inc. produces summer seasons at the Lexington Conservatory Theatre (Equity Stock Z) in Greene County, New York. A total of 30 mainstage productions and more than 40 workshops and readings are presented.

1980-81: The name of the theatre is changed to Capital Repertory Company with a move to Albany, New York and the discontinuance of Lexington Conservatory Theatre. A three play subscription series opens in a borrowed facility on the downtown campus of the State University of New York at Albany.

- * JOE EGG
- * THE SORROWS OF STEPHEN
- * THE HOSTAGE
- * Readings of four new plays

Spring, 1981: Capital Rep's first season is deemed an artistic success. However, financially the operation is in serious trouble: \$90,000 in accumulated debts.

- * The current Executive Director, Business Manager and Administrative Director of Capital Rep resign
- * Capital Rep has no home
- * Capital Rep is unable to generate a community based Board of Trustees

Summer, 1981: Bruce Bouchard and Peter H. Clough, with the permission of the remaining members of the company -- a tightly knit group of people who had been involved with the organization for several years -- explore the possibility of preventing the demise of the theatre.

- * Bouchard and Clough inherit 12 unreconciled bank accounts, a dozen boxes of paper which constitute the total corporate history, two desks in a room of the City of Albany's Arts Office, a list of names of potentially interested community citizens, scores of unpaid bills, summonses and absolutely no assets.

Fall, 1981: Where to begin?

- * Lewis A. Swyer, prominent contractor and advocate of the arts in the region for many years (Chairman of the Board of the Saratoga Performing Arts Center), assists Bouchard and Clough in meeting with and ultimately securing from Erastus Corning II, Mayor, and the City of Albany, a five year, rent free lease on an empty 10,000 square foot supermarket in downtown Albany. The City also agrees to cover the utility costs for the first year. For the moment, the news cannot be made public.
- * Despite a growing list of interested people, the old debts are so large that there is no way to cover them and raise the monies needed for a projected 4-play spring season.
- * Brian F. Mumford, Esq. (Harvey and Harvey, Mumford & Kingsley) agrees to handle all legal work on a Chapter XI Bankruptcy Reorganization Plan, the only means to "buy time" on the old debts.

November, 1981: Things start to pick up.

- * A Task Force of 25 people committed to putting Capital Rep on its feet is organized.
- * NYS Office of General Services agrees to let Capital Rep dismantle abandoned movie scenery from "Ghost Story," from which 60% of the lumber needed to construct seating risers could be salvaged.
- * A donated renovation plan reveals a proposed 258-seat thrust stage plus office area, lobby, box office, dressing rooms, prop and costume shops. Scenery will be constructed in another building, 1/4 mile from the theatre.
- * \$35,000 in pledges from area banks, businesses and individuals is secured for start-up monies.
- * Formal petition to Bankruptcy Court is filed.
- * A press conference is held in the theatre announcing a season of four plays, each running 2 1/2 weeks, opening March 2, 1982. A budget of \$168,000 is projected through June, 1982.
- * Work is begun to secure additional materials and labor -- all donated -- to aid in the creation of the theatre space. There is no money in the budget for renovation.
- * Bouchard and Clough, along with a newly hired Business Manager, collect their first paychecks just before Thanksgiving.

December, 1981:

- * Two area lumber companies agree to donate the additional lumber materials needed. Apprentice carpenters from the local Carpenters Union will assist on the project beginning each Saturday in January.
- * The Mohawk-Hudson Community Foundation awards Capital Rep \$2,000 to cover the purchase of 260 used theatre seats.
- * A season subscription brochure is printed and sales begin.
- * Business Agent of the local IBEW Electrical Workers Union agrees to have some of his members donate labor on needed electrical work.

January 5, 1982: The first board is actually cut for the renovation and creation of the actual theatre space. Office space will happen later.

- * By the end of the month, over 60 women and men from nine building and trades unions have donated labor to the effort: carpenters, masons, laborers, electricians, plumbers, steel workers, painters, operating engineers and sheet metal workers.

February, 1982: Over 200 volunteers are involved in the renovation.

- * More than 60 area businesses have donated materials toward the effort.

March, 1982: Will we make it?

- * March 5, 1982: 8:00 PM. First public preview of TABLE MANNERS opens to wonderful response.
- * March 6, 1982: TABLE MANNERS opens. Reviews are very good.
- * March 7, 1982: Free performance of TABLE MANNERS presented for members of the businesses who assisted in creating the theatre. Total value of contributed materials and donated labor: \$100,000.
- * March 8, 1982: Final tally of subscriptions: 1,218.
- * March 26, 1982: A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE opens. Production is cited for the superb work of the actress playing Blanche.
- * April 17, 1982: The world premiere of FEATHERS opens. Author Jeanne Darnell is cited for wonderful dialogue, albeit a somewhat light play.
- * May 8, 1982: A new adaptation of FRANKENSTEIN opens. Production is overly long, but praised for its style and form. Albany Steel and Iron Supply is the Corporate Sponsor.

June 30, 1982: The fiscal year (November, 1981 - June, 1982) ended with a balanced budget. The \$30,000 grant awarded by the New York State Council on the Arts in December, 1981 was critical to this artistic and financial success. The grant also demonstrated NYSCA's confidence in the artistic and managerial strengths of Capital Rep.

Summer, 1982: Gearing up for a full regional theatre season of six plays, each running 3 1/2 weeks, begins.

- * Formalization of a working Board of Trustees.
- * An additional phase of renovation is completed; value of contributed materials is estimated at \$55,000.
- * New York State Council on the Arts grants Capital Rep \$45,000.
- * City of Albany agrees to cover costs of utilities for 1982-83.

October, 1982: Opening of second season. 1,950 season subscribers.

- * October 30, 1982: SEA MARKS opens. This is the first of what will be a number of productions of plays which had very short runs in NYC, but which Capital Rep believes merit a second look due to the significance of the material. Reviews are superb; the last few performances sell out. Corporate Sponsor: Mobil Foundation, Inc.

* November 27, 1982

TARTUFFE opens. A beautifully costumed production with scenery less successful. Reviews are mixed.

* January 1, 1983

TRUE WEST opens, the first production ever in this area of a play by Sam Shepard. Reviews are mixed to good.

* January 29, 1983

THE MOUND BUILDERS by Lanford Wilson opens to the worst notices yet received by Capital Rep. The major quarrel is with the script and direction.

* February 26, 1983

The world premiere of Nina Shengold's HOMESTEADERS opens to rave reviews and packed houses. Key Bank, N.A. is the Corporate Sponsor. This production attracts interest from the NYC professional community. The Long Wharf, in particular, is impressed by both the play and production.

* March 26, 1983

THE SKIN OF OUR TEETH opens in an offbeat production which is met with mixed reviews. Corporate Sponsor: Sterling Winthrop Research Institute - Sterling Drug, Inc.

* June, 1983: Capital Rep goes to Chicago to accept the Business Committee for the Arts' first place national award for the theatre's involvement with local business and labor in the support of a performing arts organization. With the honor comes national management recognition and a \$5,000 check.

June 30, 1983: Season ends with a current operating deficit of \$25,000. A short term loan is secured and then repaid in August, 1983. Total 1982-83 budget is \$368,000.

Summer, 1983:

- * A six play season is planned for 1983-84
- * New York State Council on the Arts awards Capital Rep \$50,000
- * Budget for 1983-84 is projected at \$550,000
- * The Howard and Bush Foundation awards Capital Rep \$30,000 and The Hearst Foundation \$5,000 toward the cost of a \$70,000 stage lighting system (previously equipment had been rented.)
- * \$10,000 additional contributed renovation work is completed
- * City of Albany agrees to continue paying utility costs, now averaging \$25,000 per year. This, plus the contributed space, totals nearly \$50,000 in support of Capital Rep, making the City of Albany one of the three most significant supporters by a City government of a theatre in the country.

- * Board of Trustees expands to 32 members

Third Season, 1983-84. 2,800 subscribers:

- * October 29, 1983: THE GLASS MENAGERIE OPENS in a critically acclaimed and popular production. Corporate Sponsor is Key Bank, N.A.
- * November 26, 1983: HAPPY END opens to mixed reviews. Limitations of budget and facility noted in respect to production's weaknesses; unevenness in casting. Corporate Sponsor: Sealy of Eastern New York.
- * December 31, 1983: TRANSLATIONS opens. A beautifully cast and staged production; reviews and attendance both strong. There is an anonymous Corporate Sponsor.
- * January 28, 1984: LIVING TOGETHER opens. Although the production is deemed only average by artistic standards, it breaks all box office records. Corporate Sponsor is Sterling Winthrop Research Institute - Sterling Drug, Inc.
- * February 25, 1984: The world premiere of ALICE AND FRED opens to mixed to negative reviews. The subject matter and ending create considerable outcry. Response from peers from other regional theatres is very positive, and production is reviewed positively by VARIETY. Corporate sponsor is Ocean Data Systems, Inc.
- * March 24, 1984: THE WAKE OF JAMEY FOSTER opens. Like SEA MARKS and TRANSLATIONS, this production gives strong material

another look after negative response
in NYC. Corporate Sponsor: L.A.
Swyer Companies, Inc.

June, 1984:

- * Capital Rep is selected as one of five theatres nationally to participate in the 1985 FDG/CBS New Plays Program.
- * Capital Rep produces its fourth fundraising event. The Honorary Chairman is Pulitzer Prize-winning author and Capital Region native William Kennedy. The event raises \$30,000 net, ten fold that of any preceding benefit.
- * Budget for 1983-84 is balanced

Summer, 1984:

- * City of Albany agrees to cover the utility costs of the Market Theatre for another season. Additionally, the City will cover some energy conservation/cosmetic renovations.
- * Projected budget for 1984-85 is \$700,000. All accounting procedures are now on an in-house computer system, as is the subscriber data base.

Fall, 1984:

- * Each play runs 4 1/2 weeks, a total of 31 performances per play. This is an increase from 22 performances the previous season.
- * Capital Rep hires its first full-time Literary Manager and Development Director.
- * Capital Rep holds its first retreat for Trustees, focusing on a long range plan. 23 of 30 Trustees attend.

Fourth Season, 1984-85. 3,200 subscribers:

- * October 23, 1984: AND A NIGHTINGALE SANG opens to strong reviews, citing an outstanding performance by the lead actress. Corporate Sponsor is Key Bank, N.A.
- * In October, 1984, the Trustees approve paying off all remaining obligations under Chapter XI 2 years ahead of its originally projected completion date, and only 2 years after the Reorganization Plan was approved by Bankruptcy Court.
- * November, 1984, Capital Rep is selected as the Outstanding New Enterprise among all not-for-profit businesses in the area by the "Capital District Business Review."
- * November 17, 1984: THE DINING ROOM OPENS to good reviews. Corporate Sponsor is State Street Centre, L.A. Swyer Companies,

Developers.

- * In December, Lynne Alvarez's THE WONDERFUL TOWER OF HUMBERT LAVOIGNET is chosen from over 1,450 submissions as the sixth play of the season, and Capital Rep's entry in the 1985 FDG/CBS New Plays competition.

* December 29, 1984

WHO'S AFRAID OF VIRGINIA WOOLF? opens to mixed reviews, citing outstanding performance by actor playing George. Corporate Sponsor is Krolick & DeGraff.

* February 2, 1985:

QUILTERS opens with enthusiastic advance sales. Capital Rep is the first regional theatre to produce this musical since its brief NYC run. Corporate Sponsor is Sterling Winthrop Research Institute, a Division of Sterling Drug, Inc.

* March 9, 1985

MASTER HAROLD...AND THE BOYS opens to excellent reviews, citing superb performance by actor playing Sam. Corporate Sponsor is Sealy Mattress Company.

- * On April 12, 1985, Capital Rep holds a press conference announcing the world premiere of a new play by Toni Morrison, to be produced by Capital Rep in association with the New York State Writers Institute, William Kennedy, Director, and the Capital District Humanities Program. The play will be produced as part of the 1985-86 season.

* April 13, 1985

The world premiere of THE WONDERFUL TOWER OF HUMBERT LAVOIGNET opens to mixed reviews. Corporate Sponsor is Ocean Data Systems, Inc.

- * From May 21-25, 1985, Capital Rep's First Annual Festival of Staged Readings is held, sponsored by The Foundation of The Dramatists Guild (FDG), Mobil Foundation, Inc. and Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Albert.

June, 1985:

- * Capital Rep's production of THE WONDERFUL TOWER OF HUMBERT LAVOIGNET is judged by a panel of national theatre professionals to be co-winner of the 1985 FDG/CBS New Plays Program competition, an honor shared with the Magic Theatre of San Francisco.

Summer, 1985:

- * The building housing Capital Rep is sold. However, the City of

Albany includes as a condition of sale the continuation of utilities being paid by the new owner.

- * Capital Rep holds its annual benefit in conjunction with the grand opening of a new department store in the region. More than 1,000 people attend, netting the theatre more than \$75,000.
- * Projected budget for 1985-86 is \$880,000, with the bulk of the increase allocated for artistic salaries.

Fifth season, 1985-86. 3,800 subscribers:

- * October 12, 1985 PLAYBOY OF THE WESTERN WORLD opens to mixed to good reviews. Corporate Sponsor is Sealy Mattress Company.
- * November 16, 1985 WHAT THE BUTLER SAW opens to extremes in reviews. Corporate Sponsor is State Street Center.
- * January 4, 1986 The world premiere of DREAMING EMMETT by Toni Morrison opens to mixed reviews. Corporate Sponsor is Key Bank, N.A. The play breaks all box office records.
- * February 8, 1986 GOODBYE FREDDY by Elizabeth Diggs opens to excellent notices. Corporate Sponsor is Sterling Winthrop Research, Sterling Drug, Inc.
- * March 15, 1986 The world premiere of Don Nigro's NOVEMBER opens to mostly favorable reviews.
- * April 19, 1986 A newly commissioned adaptation of Gaston Leroux's THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA opens to mixed reviews. Book and lyrics are by Kathleen Masterson, music by David Bishop.
- * From May 21-25, 1986, Capital Rep's Second Annual Festival of Staged Readings is held. Five plays are read in five days: FAULT LINE by John Klein, JUPITER AND ELSEWHERE by Gram Slaton, THIN AIR by Lynne Alvarez, WHEN THE MUSIC'S OVER by Robert Meiksins, and THE RAPIDS by David Steven Rappaport.
- * June 27, 1986, Capital Rep's third annual fundraiser is held. Dubbed "Summer Whites," it is held at the Terrace Galleries of the New York State Museum. Over 300 people attend.
- * On July 10, 1986, the 6-play, 1986-87 season is announced, featuring a million dollar budget and three world premieres.

Fall, 1986: 1986-87 season begins with 4,583 subscribers.

- * October 18, 1986: The world premiere of Granville Burgess' DUSKY SALLY opens to mixed reviews. The week before opening, Capital Rep learns that the play has

been selected for a Stage Two Award from The Foundation of The Dramatists Guild (FDG). Play sells out in final two weeks; box office second only to DREAMING EMMETT. Corporate Sponsor is Key Bank, N.A.

* November 22, 1986

The world premiere of Dalene Young's COMMUNITY PROPERTY opens to poor notices. Corporate Sponsor is Sealy Mattress Co.

* In November, 1986, Capital Rep submits an early draft of SAINT FLORENCE by Elizabeth Diggs to the Kennedy Center Fund for New American Plays Program.

* January 3, 1987

A VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE, directed by Tony Giordano -- a four-theatre collaboration -- opens to rave reviews and strong audience response. The production, which is the product of the combined efforts of GeVa Theatre of Rochester, Studio Arena of Buffalo, Syracuse Stage and Capital Rep, is underwritten by Citibank. The collaboration allows the theatres to mount a production that would be beyond the ordinary capabilities

1989-90 MARKETING PLAN
CAPITAL REPERTORY COMPANY
ALBANY, NEW YORK

INTRODUCTION AND A LOOK AT THE 1988-89 SEASON

Following is Capital Repertory Company's Marketing Plan for the 1989-90 season with strategies, goals, timelines and income/expense projections.

In the past season, Capital Rep experienced a 20% drop in subscriptions, a reflection in part of audience resistance to the 1987-88 season. The renewal rate at 66.2% was our lowest ever. New subscription sales also reached an all time low.

However, single ticket sales grew steadily in 1988-89. A much improved artistic product, more popular scripts, good reviews, positive word-of-mouth, more aggressive target marketing and advertising all contributed to this growth. Through the first week of THE IMMIGRANT (play #5 in the season), we can safely predict a record-breaking year at the box office. Indeed, we should close the season ahead of our single ticket goal of \$230,000.

For 1989-90, we can predict modest growth in subscriptions and a slight drop in single ticket sales. The drop from a \$230,000 goal for 1988-89 to a \$225,000 goal in 1989-90 can be explained simply by citing the fact there will be fewer seats to sell next year. We are cutting back from 5

1/2 week to 4 1/2 week runs, thereby decreasing our seating capacity by 22%. In addition, we are freezing single ticket prices.

The poor response to last year's subscription campaign can only partially be traced to the unevenness of the work on stage. What we have not been able yet to measure is any potential resistance to subscribing itself. Increasingly, we have heard objections to the cost of subscribing (the large outlay of money in advance of the season) and scheduling inflexibility despite ticket exchange privileges. Also, more and more people are opting to pay more for single tickets so that they can "pick and choose." It will be interesting to see how the subscription campaign fares after an artistically and critically acclaimed season.

Because of the poor response to the drive for new subscribers last year, I am recommending once again cutting back on the number of brochures mailed. Instead, we should concentrate efforts on our current patrons - single ticket buyers and former subscribers -- and only our very best prospects. With the renewal campaign, we are changing the look of the flyer this year to capitalize on the success of the 1988-89 season.

I am still concerned with the need to diversify our audience. We are not successfully developing an audience amongst the younger professionals in our community in particular. With their busy
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lifestyles, subscription is not necessarily the most attractive ticket package we can offer. Yet, we want to develop more regular attendance than that of the single ticket buyer. Although Lincoln Center has recommended that we do not mix subscriptions and membership, I think we have to develop an alternative to the traditional subscription package and introduce it in 1989-90.

Because the Albany League of Arts finally instituted the half price, day of performance "Hot Seats" program, we can phase out the "Flash Card" program. We will continue to offer discount tickets through such outside programs as "Entertainment" two-fers and in-house target discounts (such as "Nurse Nights" during SAINT FLORENCE), students and seniors.

Group sales, like single tickets, grew substantially in 1988-89 and we expect even more growth in the new season. The student matinee program was filled almost to capacity, a reflection in part of more aggressive marketing, more accessible material and increased awareness as a result of the OUTREACH PROGRAM.

The newsletter was redesigned in 1988-89 to be more readable. Editorial content, which previously had been determined by the Literary Manager, was overseen by the Marketing Department. However, the thrust of the newsletter remained literary in nature.

In conclusion, this is the first season Smith & Jones Communications handled our graphics, media placement and other marketing needs. An extra effort has been made by them to make our advertising dollars more efficient. In 1989-90, we will continue to make our ads more effective, we will be exploring an expanded media cash/trade program to net us more trade dollars and we will look at more target advertising opportunities. Graphics have been rethought during the past year and a new look for Capital Rep is evolving.